

Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands - Government Report on Additional Housing Growth

Members will be aware that after the West Midlands Regional Assembly submitted the Phase 2 revision of the Regional Spatial Strategy Preferred Option to the Secretary of State at the beginning of the year, Baroness Andrews requested that Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM) undertake work to see how additional levels of housing growth could be delivered within the region to 2026.

To meet this request GOWM appointed Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (NLP) to consider how the housing supply range for the West Midlands could be increased. NLP are to report the findings of their study to a regional seminar on **Thursday 9th October**.

However, GOWM has in advance briefed the press on the outline findings of the NLP study. As a consequence you may well see articles covering this issue in local papers or hear about it on local radio. In order that this does not come as a shock to you the following information will help clarify the position and the status of the NLP study:

- The work that has been undertaken by NLP for GOWM is **not policy and does not represent the formal views of either GOWM or the Regional Assembly**. It is a report to GOWM which they will then in turn use to submit evidence to the Examination in Public (EIP) of the Regional Strategy which will start in April 2009.
- Once the final NLP report is available there will be a briefing for Members on its content and conclusions.
- The NLP study will be reported to Cabinet in November in order to allow the Council to make a formal response on its conclusions to the Inspector who will run the EIP next spring.

For your additional information the outline findings of the study with regard to housing increases within the county are set out below:

- The study sets out 3 scenarios as to how increased growth could be achieved around the region. These include an increase in housing growth numbers **over** those set out in the Preferred Option for Worcestershire of between 8,400 and 13,400 dwellings for the period 2006-26. **Within** this total there are specific District totals:
 - ❑ Additional dwellings are suggested for Bromsgrove District of between 5,000 and 7,500 dwellings. It is suggested that this could be achieved through significant extensions to either Redditch, Birmingham or both.
 - ❑ Additional dwellings are suggested for South Worcestershire of between 3,000 and 5,500 dwellings. It is suggested that this could be achieved by 1,500 rural provision; 1,500 at the Eco-town location at Middle Quinton; and up to 2,500 dwellings at Worcester.
 - ❑ An additional 400 dwellings with Wyre Forest District, to be provided within the rural area.

There will inevitably be a lot of interest in the NLP study and its findings. However it is important to remember that the study findings represent one particular point of view, which the Council will be able to comment upon and thoroughly challenge as part of the debate on housing provision within the region. At this point in time they should not raise undue concern.

Further details of the study findings and Member briefings will be arranged as appropriate in the coming months.

Contact:

Paul Maitland, Planning Manager

Tel: 01905 766717

pmaitland@worcestershire.gov.uk